THE PERSECUTION AND RESISTANCE OF LOIC LE RIBAULT

French geologist
and forensic
scientist Loïc Le
Ribault developed
an organic silica
treatment for
arthritis and many
other illnesses but
fell out with the
medical orthodoxy,
the justice system
and the
pharmaceutical
corporations in the
process.

by Martin J. Walker © 2004

Posted 24 November 2004 at http://www.communicationagents.com/ emma_holister/2004/11/24/ loic_le_ribaults_resistance.htm I shall continue my actions of distributing OS5 despite all the opposition. I do it for all those patients for whom I have the opportunity and honour of caring, those who were abandoned by modern medicine which was unable to offer them a cure or who found the orthodox treatments offered worse than the illness itself.

- Loïc Le Ribault

oïc Le Ribault, France's most renowned forensic scientist¹ and specialist in the study of silica, holds court in the dingy surroundings of the Flying Fish pub on the harbour in St Helier, Jersey. With a Gallic shrug and in faltering English, he explains how the pub has become his home and his office.

He knows almost everyone in the bar, as he knows the bus drivers, the local shopkeepers and many of the harbour's boat owners. He knows them because he has "treated them, for this illness and that illness". "Many of them I have cured with OS5," he says.

Sitting in the Flying Fish, drinking bitter and smoking the occasional Gauloise, Le Ribault does not seem like a man who has been hounded out of France because he discovered and distributed a treatment for arthritis and a number of other common ailments.

In 1985, while working as an independent forensic scientist for the French judiciary, Le Ribault joined forces with a highly acclaimed research chemist, Professor Norbert Duffaut from the University of Bordeaux. Between them, they hoped to develop their common work on organic silica, a substance which they believed to have a wide range of therapeutic uses. But after 12 years of work together, Duffaut was dead, poisoned in suspicious circumstances perhaps as a consequence of their work on the new therapy, and Le Ribault himself had suffered two months' solitary confinement in a French prison.

Today, Le Ribault is on his own, forced to ground in Jersey, a stateless alien on the run from the French police, his life turned into a desperate adventure. He is paying the price for falling out with the scientific orthodoxy, medical professionals and the French establishment.

Loïc Le Ribault appears quintessentially French. He is phlegmatic, and when he is not laughing gently and self-deprecatingly his rubbery face deflates with the world-weary sadness of a circus clown. His well-worn casual clothes, his white wings of cotton wool hair floating around the bald dome of his head and his lack of fluent English, for which he constantly apologises, make Le Ribault appear wise but forgetful. Listening to him, you have to keep reminding yourself that over the last five years he has lost everything but his mind.

EARLY PROMISE IN A GRAIN OF SAND

Thirty years ago, still in his twenties, Loïc Le Ribault was a precocious young academic, having groundbreaking papers published by the French Academy of Sciences. At twenty-four, in 1971, he discovered a new function for the electron scanning microscope (ESM) which enabled him to discern the history of grains of sand.

Previously the electron scanning microscope, capable at that time of 30,000x magnification, had been used in biology and medicine and no one had imagined that it might be used for looking at rocks. Under the ESM, Le Ribault found that he could discern the entire history of a grain of sand: where and when it had originated, how it had been formed, where and how it had been transported, where it had next lodged, how long it had stayed in that place.

By the time he had finished his research, he had devised a list of 250 criteria by which the history of sand might be diagnosed. The field was later to become so specialised that it would take three years to train a scientist in the technical knowledge to carry out these tests.²

Le Ribault's approach to analysis and detection of sand had some academic and commercial uses but was most clearly an invaluable aid to policing. While still working at university, he was approached by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and became a forensic consultant for them.

Despite this early discovery of a new use for the ESM, Le Ribault found it hard to get work in the universities after he'd qualified. So in 1982, he set up his own national laboratory for electron microscopy, called CARME, and quickly became France's most noted forensic scientist. CARME became the principal laboratory used by the police service, the judiciary and the French Home Office.

Le Ribault is the first to admit that he is not a diplomat, even that he is anarchistic in his view of society. Constant struggles between himself and the French Home Office, seemingly about

hegemony, did not endear him to servants of the State. At the height of CARME's work, Le Ribault was a nationally recognised figure with a high public profile, working and commenting on some of France's most intriguing criminal, military and political cases. Always a populist, he was much sought after by television, radio and the newspapers as well as by the French political parties.

"When I had CARME, every week I had articles in the press and on TV, and every French party asked me to be involved with them. On TV and in newspapers, I made information

accessible. Very often I did lectures in primary and secondary schools as well as universities."

The French Home Office and the police service seemed to have been wary of Le Ribault's cavalier genius as well as his tacit control of Home Office forensics, despite his brilliant record as an expert witness. He says that the French State frequently referred to him as *their* scientist and to his laboratory as that of the Home Office.

Le Ribault's career as France's most eminent forensic scientist came to a sudden end in 1991 when the Home Office decided to integrate its own regional forensic laboratories equipped with electron microscopes. In the following debacle, Le Ribault lost his laboratory, which had employed 30-odd people, and his home, which he had mortgaged as surety for the laboratory.

A resilient character, Le Ribault adapted to his new life, lived in the family home and returned to his first love, silica. Back in 1972, while working with sand on the ESM, he had made an interesting discovery: that a layer of water-soluble amorphous silica which contained micro-organisms covered the surface of some sand grains. He found that these micro-organisms and the secretions which they left on the sand contained organic silica. Organic silica differs from mineral silica which makes up the majority of the Earth's crust, in that it contains carbon and can be readily assimilated by animals. By 1975, Le Ribault had created a process by which it was possible to recover these deposits from the surface of the sand.

All of this work was accepted by the scientific establishment

and his papers published by the French Academy of Sciences.

There had been constant research into organic silica over the previous 50 years and some of this had raised questions about the therapeutic use of this substance. In his early work as a geologist, Le Ribault had not been following the research into silica and health. But in the early 1980s, while working on these organic silica deposits, he found that after immersing his hands in organic silica solution his psoriasis was cured. From then on, Le Ribault focused his work on silica's therapeutic properties.

FROM POLLUTANT TO ESSENTIAL NUTRIENT

Silica is an essential element of living matter. It is found in body tissue, the thymus gland, the vascular lining, the adrenal glands, the liver, the spleen, the pancreas and in considerable quantity in hair. With ageing, the body loses its store of organic silica and is unable to replace it from sources outside the body which are predominantly mineral silica.

It was originally thought that silica is at worst an environmental contaminant of the human body and at best an element which quickly passes through the body and is excreted. These ideas

> were based almost entirely upon observations of mineral silica, which in the form of dust and particles was responsible for a number of serious illnesses such as silicosis.

> Silica in mineral form had been used therapeutically, but it was absorbed inefficiently into the human body. It had traditionally gained a place in the pantheon of herbal remedies, being present in horsetail fern and some vegetables.

Work since the 1930s on absorbable mineral and organic silica showed irrefutably that organic silica could be described as an essential

nutrient for both humans and other animals.³ It is necessary for early calcification of bones and animals' shells and its deficiency has been found to produce alterations and abnormalities in bone growth. It has also been observed that silica plays a part in the make-up of the cells which form blood vessel walls. Perhaps most importantly, silica has been found to directly affect and form a large part of the connective tissue and cartilage, which play an important part in joints and the illnesses which affect them.

In studies during the 1970s, it was found that silica supplementation aided bone and cartilage growth. In 1993, it was reported that treatment with silica could stimulate bone formation. By the 1990s, silica formulations were being used by some pharmaceutical companies on wound and burn dressings because it was recognised that silica healed wounds more quickly and could stabilise burns.^{4,5}

NORBERT DUFFAUT: A MAN "ON THE MOON"

In 1982, Le Ribault began work with Professor Norbert Duffaut, a chemist and research engineer at the CNRS (the National Centre for Scientific Research) situated at the University of Bordeaux. In 1957, Duffaut had synthesised a molecule of organic silica which was capable of being absorbed by the human body. Unlike Le Ribault, Duffaut had been using his organic silica as a therapeutic agent, treating patients since his first discoveries in the 1950s. Like Ribault, Duffaut had paid little attention to the academic papers on organic silica, convinced he was ahead of the field.

While still working at

university, Le Ribault was

approached by the US Federal

Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

and became a forensic

consultant for them.

By the time Le Ribault and Duffaut first met, Duffaut had been treating people for years and was well known in the southwest of France and even in Paris. Duffaut had created NDR, the Norbert Duffaut Remedy, and had manufactured many litres for thousands and thousands of patients.

Whether to avoid the regulatory agencies or simply out of sheer cussedness, Duffaut refused to keep any records of his transactions. "He absolutely refused to keep a record of anything which he did," says Le Ribault. "He would say, 'We are right; we will win in the end'.'

By 1958 Duffaut had begun clinical work with Dr Jacques Janet, a gastroenterologist, and had also begun treating people, very successfully, for arthritis. However, Duffaut was sure that cardiovascular work and blood circulation work were the most

important therapeutic goals in relation to organic silica. So in the 1960s Duffaut worked with Dr Rager, a cardiovascular surgeon, who used organic silica for postoperative recovery.

In 1967, Rager was awarded the J. Levy Bricker Prize by the French Academy of Medicine for his work on the use of organic silica in the treatment of man. Rager's work also determined that organic silica helped cancer patients withstand chemotherapy.

Le Ribault and Duffaut had more in common than a passion for silica. Duffaut, in his sixties, was considered by many to be an impossibly difficult man. Le Ribault,

speaking with sadness but with his usual humour, says of Duffaut:

"He was less diplomatic than me. A lot less diplomatic than me! Can you imagine? He was impossible. He considered that the system was made up of stupid people; he was right, of course, but he said it to them on many occasions. He was eccentric, very much an individualist. I guess I was the only person able to work with him."

Like Le Ribault. Duffaut also used humour to shield himself from the deeper conflicts. "Duffaut was a very,

very clever man, really a genius, a high-level chemist who was always singing and joking and smiling, all the day long—every day!" Le Ribault fondly remembers an unmarried man, utterly immersed in his scientific work, cut off from the humdrum intercourse of the everyday world to such an extent, Le Ribault jokes, that he was "on the Moon" for much of the time.

Duffaut had been testing his *synthetic* organic silica molecule therapeutically for 15 years by the time he met Le Ribault, and had frequently offered his invention free to the French State and its medical research organisations. All his approaches had been met with utter, seemingly deliberate, silence.

In 1985, Duffaut and Le Ribault took out an international patent to protect the therapeutic use of organic silica. And in 1987, like many other publicly concerned scientists outside the pharmaceutical companies, they made representations to the French minister for research, asking that he consider their discovery for trials in cases of AIDS-related illnesses.

So determined were they to force government recognition of the health-giving qualities of silica that they had their request, and the

evidence to support it, legally served on the minister. Duffaut and Le Ribault received no reply.

In November 1993, Duffaut was found dead in his bed by neighbours who noticed he had not been out of his house that day. Despite the fact that Duffaut was in his early seventies and had died in bed, a post-mortem was held and potassium cyanide was found in his system. Although no letter was found, and despite the fact that witnesses had seen Duffaut the night before in good spirits, the police concluded that he had committed suicide.

Initially Le Ribault accepted the suicide of his colleague, but later he began to have doubts. His principal doubt is that Duffaut, a highly trained chemist, would have chosen potassium cyanide as a vehicle for suicide, knowing that it would occasion an incredibly painful death.

> Duffaut's writing prior to his death did show a despondency clearly brought about by continual disappointment and frustration. His last notes contained the sentence, "The authorities have condemned my discovery

out of hand without having even tested it".

RESEARCH INTO ORGANIC SILICA **THERAPEUTICS**

As his work progressed with Duffaut, Loïc Le Ribault found that, in his mind, there were few academic considerations on the therapeutic uses of organic silica. He was preoccupied throughout the 1980s and early 1990s with trying to make the organic

silica, which Duffaut had been using for compresses, drinkable.

"One of the most serious difficulties was trying to make G5 drinkable. The solution we had created was slightly toxic, alright for using on the skin but not for drinking. Perhaps no more toxic than red wine, but I didn't want it to be at all toxic."

When Le Ribault discovered the effect of organic silica on his psoriasis, he was sceptical about the long-term therapeutic value of his discovery. However, after two or three years of working with a number of doctors who

used the discovery on patients and after his years of work with Duffaut, he decided that he was in a position to send files to the Ministry of Health, asking it to carry out trials on the basis that he would supply the solutions for free.

He did not receive answers to his many communications. The private treatment of patients did not fit with either Le Ribault's or Duffaut's ideas about health care, so both wanted the French government to take up the idea of organic silica.

By the mid-1990s, Le Ribault and Duffaut between them had treated well over 10,000 people, firstly with organic silica poultices and then with a drinkable tonic.

Determined to make his findings of public consequence, Le Ribault arranged personal meetings in America with the chairmen of the main pharmaceutical laboratories; he travelled to visit executives in Canada, and the length and breadth of France.

All the people he met showed interest and most told him they would be in touch within weeks. As he now says, "I have been waiting fifteen years for a reply". One executive of a pharmaceutical company offered him £1,000,000 just to bury his discovery.

By the mid-1990s,

Le Ribault and Duffaut

between them had

treated well over 10,000

people, firstly with

organic silica poultices

and then with a

drinkable tonic.

REGULATING MOLECULES

At the end of 1994, Le Ribault, now working on his own with an organic silica molecule suspended in water, which he called G5, stepped up production and distribution to people with health problems. It was Le Ribault's case that as a natural, non-toxic substance, G5 did not need a licence; he saw it as a tonic or dietary supplement.

The problem of who pays to test a novel medical product, developed outside the pharmaceutical companies, has become a serious issue in America and Europe. On the boundaries of different kinds of medical treatment, constant war is being waged. Trade and practice with non-pharmaceutical treatments are constantly being attacked by big companies. The most common aggressors in this war of attrition are the pharmaceutical companies. With close allies in the regulatory agencies, university research departments, hospital trusts and the media, the

pharmcos have a strategy of whittling away at the number of herbs that are legally available and constantly attempting to restrict the availability of vitamins and food supplements.

The highly capitalised pharmaceutical companies can afford to compete with each other, paying hundreds of thousands, often millions, of pounds to carry out trials and then thousands of pounds for preparatory paperwork so their cases can be put before the regulatory agencies. When they have obtained licences, they use aggressive marketing strategies, regulatory protection and sometimes "dirty tricks" to ensure their competitive ascendancy.

Herbalists, homoeopaths, nutritional therapists and those producers and practitioners who work with non-pharmaceutical treatments, and who are unable to raise the money or hire sympathetic laboratories to carry out trials, are forced to market and use their treatments with one hand tied behind their back, unable to advertise any health-enhancing effects of any of their therapies.

Some few innovators are fortunate achieving special discretionary awards from the FDA in America or from the

Medicines Control Agency or MAFF [now DEFRA, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Ed.] in Britain, which exempt their natural therapies from the need to be licensed. The progress of these odd treatments is irregular and haphazard and is probably dependent upon whether or not there is competition from pharmaceutical products.

The competitive, financial and professional censorship by multinationals and doctors of novel natural health therapies, at this lower end of the health-care market, has inevitably spawned "illegal" businesses and made criminals out of some doctors, scientists and therapists. But perhaps more importantly, in an odd way, the pharmaceutically protective regulations and their policing have also created criminals out of many patients. By denying patients the freedom to choose their own treatments, the laws and the regulatory agencies have forced some patients into an underground health-care culture.

It was into this maelstrom of pharmaceutical protection,

pharmco-biased regulation and confused policing that Le Ribault, tired of the invisibility of the authorities and angered by the strange death of his colleague, launched G5 in 1994. Le Ribault's determination to confront the big companies and the regulatory agencies was to bring his life collapsing about him.

PUBLICITY AND CONSPIRACY

Soon after Le Ribault began to distribute G5, in June 1995 Jean-Michel Graille, a journalist on *Sud-Ouest Dimanche*, approached him and asked if he could write about his discovery. Ten years previously, Graille had written a book titled *Dossier Priore: une nouvelle affaire Pasteur?*⁷ After getting agreement from his editor, Graille attached himself to Le Ribault for four months, observing his work as a scientist, innovator and now entrepreneur. After some initial scepticism, Graille became completely convinced of the therapeutic effects of Le Ribault's

discovery. In October 1995, *Sud-Ouest Dimanche* published, across five pages of its magazine, a detailed account of Le Ribault's work and the suppression of his findings.

The publication of this article had unbelievable results that dragged Le Ribault into an uncontrollable conflict with the judiciary and other, more hidden, forces.

In the days following publication, Le Ribault received 35,000 phone calls, letters and visiting patients.

He was obliged to rent a hotel and call scientists, doctors and personal friends to help sort out the calls and callers. *Sud-Ouest Dimanche* had to hire eight receptionists to

answer calls. The local telephone service broke down and the phone lines to police stations and post offices were blocked for days.

In the three months that followed the article, Le Ribault did his best to treat the thousands of people who converged on the area, seeking help. He says now that pharmacies in the area lost around 35% of their turnover in this tidal

The article had other, more sinister, results. Le Ribault claims that as soon as it came out, other newspapers were warned not to publish articles. He

received frequent death threats, his house was burgled and his collaborators were threatened.

One middle-aged woman, who had been his aide for many years, was attacked, seriously wounded and held hostage for an hour in Le Ribault's house. He and his colleague knew the assailant, a Marseilles criminal who had tried to force Le Ribault to give him a franchise on G5. The police did nothing when they were informed.

Either by conspiracy or simple criminal opportunism, companies suddenly began to spring up claiming to be using organic silica for health therapies. Many of these companies used Le Ribault's and Duffaut's names and their photographs and even faked their signatures. Illegal advertising material flooded the market using quotes from Graille's article. Le Ribault later saw public laboratory analysis of these products, which he says were water or mineral silica or a dangerous, unstable synthesis of organic silica.

One executive of a pharmaceutical company offered him £1,000,000 just to bury his discovery.

Le Ribault had nothing to do with these ventures, but in January 1996, after a number of apparently genuine complaints had been received about these fake products, the Order of Doctors and the Order of Pharmacologists, the professional institutions which protect the interests of doctors and pharmacists throughout France, laid a complaint against Le Ribault before an examining magistrate, citing the illegal practices of medicine and pharmacology. Initially, with the naivety of one divorced from politics, Le Ribault was pleased that the complaint had been lodged: "...this was something which I had been looking for, something which I expected. I thought that now the court would be obliged to instruct someone to make the tests." Le Ribault had about six months' grace before the hearing was due.

In the midst of these assaults, Le Ribault was unable to perceive that an all-out campaign had begun, the objective of which was to put an end to the therapeutic use of his discovery. His confusion and unhappiness were deepened by the death of Jean-Michel Graille in April 1996. Graille, perhaps his most articulate public supporter, died suddenly and unexpectedly, aged fifty, of a stroke while relaxing in his garden.

STRANDED IN ANTIGUA

Le Ribault looks back with some mirth upon his own unworldliness and the dangers which he has faced. His most self-deprecating tale, in an otherwise dark melodrama, is the story of how he came to end up in Antigua.

Following the publication of Graille's story, many individuals sent money, £500,000 in total, to enable Le Ribault to build a clinic. Amongst the sharks who suddenly appeared wanting a piece of the action was a group of businessmen who sought to advise Le Ribault on setting up a company. He took their

advice, transferring the control of the new company to nominee shareholders suggested by the group.

After some discussion and planning, Le Ribault was told that contacts had been made and bank accounts opened for him to set up his clinic in Antigua. His passport had been stolen in the house burglary, so with his fare paid by the company he set off for Antigua, undercover, via the French protectorate of Martinique. It was only when he'd landed in Antigua and found no one there to meet him that he began to realise he was alone on the other side of the world with no passport, no English language, no funds and no friends.

"I was told that the prime minister himself would be waiting for me in Antigua with a diplomatic passport and I would be free to travel. I was told that there was a bank account for me and everything was ready to start the clinic. Of course, when I got there, no one was waiting for me. I had only three small bottles of G5."

As resourceful as ever, Le Ribault began treating the rich, elderly and often arthritic boat owners as they returned from a day's sailing around the coast. At the end of his first day's work, he had a hundred pounds and appointments for the whole of the following week.

A week later, he had enough money to travel back to France, had he wanted to. By his own perseverance, Le Ribault made the contacts himself which should have been made for him in Antigua.

"I got permission from the prime minister to start a health centre. I had two kinds of patients. Local patients who had no money, and I never asked for money from them—they paid what they were able for their treatment; they brought me fish and vegetables and other things. In the evenings I went to the big hotels filled with the millionaire tourists, to cure them of their sunburn. Every day I had between twenty and forty tourists to cure. G5 gets rid of the pain of sunburn within five minutes and within an hour cures the sunburn itself. I also taught the barmen in the hotel bars how to use G5, so every evening the barmen applied poultices to the tourists."

During his time in Antigua, Le Ribault pursued an embittered relationship with his homeland. When he received regulatory agreement to produce and use G5 on Antigua, he made sure that the French press raised awkward questions about the situation in France.

But Le Ribault's strategy of embarrassment was to cost him dearly. Two days after the issue was raised in the French newspapers, the French police raided the home of his eighty-five-year-old mother and questioned her for five hours. His mother, who had

> been fit and healthy before the interrogation, fell ill that evening. She never recovered her health, and she died two weeks later.

The police told Ribault's mother that there was now a warrant out for Le Ribault's arrest and that they were searching for documents not only about G5 but also about Ribault's forensic laboratory CARME. Le Ribault thinks now that his trouble began to develop over G5 when the police had become concerned about the possible leaking of information about sensitive police cases.

Stranded in the Caribbean, Le Ribault was deeply saddened by the

death of his mother and angered by what appeared to be a gratuitous police strategy. He had not hidden himself in Antigua; the judge who was dealing with the complaint against him had his fax and phone numbers and address.

"The police knew that my mother was very old and tired. When she died, I suppose they reckoned that I would turn up at the funeral and they would be able to arrest me."

ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT IN FRANCE

In November 1997, Le Ribault felt obliged to go back to France to recover the personal and work documents which he needed to continue work in Antigua. Knowing there was a warrant out for his arrest, he decided to return covertly.

"It was my intention to show the Antiguan agreement to people in France in the hope that I could get a similar one there. I visited doctors and a number of other sympathisers who I thought could push my case forward."

Although Le Ribault was "underground" in France, two of his friends suggested that he give a lecture about G5 to a select audience. Unbeknown to him, however, his friends had contacted the police and told them where the seminar was being held, with the intention of creating media interest in his case and G5. To set Le Ribault's mind at ease, his friends told him that if the police did appear he would be whisked away, leaving sympathetic attending journalists to report the crisis.

Either by conspiracy or

criminal opportunism,

companies suddenly began to

spring up claiming to be

using organic silica for

health therapies.

In the event, Le Ribault was whisked away—not by his friends but by a jubilant police posse.

And so, by accident, the most frightening part of Le Ribault's journey began.

"I was sent immediately to jail. I was taken first to the Bordeaux station of the Regional Crime Squad, from where the police called the judge dealing with my case. They said to him, 'Victory! We have caught Le Ribault'."

The judge declined to hear Le Ribault's case that day and so Ribault was taken to Gradignan prison.

The next day, Le Ribault was taken before the judge for a 10-minute hearing. Despite the fact that the only complaint against him was, he thought, a civil complaint from the Order of Doctors and the Order of Pharmacists, the judge ordered that Le Ribault be

kept in prison. In answer to his lawyer's protests that in prison his client would be in danger from men whom he had helped convict, the judge ruled that Le Ribault be kept in solitary confinement.

What worried Le Ribault as he was taken back to the jail was the fact that no time limit had been put on his imprisonment. The judge, who was clearly "building a case", had said only that with Christmas coming up his schedule would be full and he would not be able to hear the case. Le Ribault was also concerned that the judge who had been selected to hear his case had been one of the

main customers for his forensic services when he worked for the police—a judge known throughout Bordeaux, according to Le Ribault, to be "a crazy judge; very strange, very dangerous".

Early on the day of his arrest, Le Ribault had had five teeth extracted. Now, as he entered solitary confinement, he was not only uncomfortable and isolated but also unable to eat. In the depths of winter, with snow falling outside and no heating inside, Le Ribault served his solitary confinement in a cell which had next to no glass in the windows. Two fingers on one hand

and both his feet became frozen, and consequently he now has trouble walking any distance. "The cold was the worst problem, even greater than not knowing when I would be released."

The deprivations which Le Ribault suffered in a contemporary French prison sound echoes of Solzynitsin. As with many prisons, the old systems had fallen into disuse or been adapted by the screws. Every cell had a bell in case of emergency, but the guards had switched them off because of the continuous noise.

To get help, prisoners had to push a piece of paper between the door and the doorjamb which could be seen in the corridor. This, Le Ribault says, was "alright as long as the officers liked you; if they didn't, you could wait a thousand hours". The judge allowed Le Ribault visits from only two working colleagues, specifically excluding his partner.

RELEASE AND ESCAPE FROM FRANCE

At his second and last hearing before the magistrate, Le Ribault discovered that more complaints had accumulated in his file. The charges had grown from two civil complaints to include nine criminal charges, such as the selling of a toxic substance, illegal

experimentation in biology and advertising a medicine in the press. Le Ribault did not consider himself guilty of any of these further charges.

Of the charge that he was not a doctor, Le Ribault could say only that his qualification, that of Doctor of Science, is the highest awarded by a university in France. He also made the point that any biologist and similar natural scientist who wished to emulate Pasteur, himself not a doctor, stood a good chance of being thrown in prison in modern France.

Following Le Ribault's arrest, the authorities made a number of statements relating to G5; one, very much in his favour, was an assurance that the substance was completely non-toxic.

Desperate to get Le Ribault out of this nightmare backwater, his lawyer made an application to the High Court for his release.

"I was released by the High Court, but the judges reserved their opinion and gave it two days after the hearing, which meant that I was an extra three days in prison—three days in which I did not know whether I would be released," says Le Ribault.

The court imposed strict conditions on his bail upon his release; he had to surrender his passport and report to the police station twice a week.

Released from prison, Le Ribault stayed first with a friend; but two months after he'd settled there he received a phone call from a police friend, informing him that police offi-

cers were on their way to arrest him. Five minutes later, with Le Ribault watching from the garden, six police officers raided his friend's house.

He went next to stay with another friend, but the next day Le Ribault noticed police cars observing the address. This time, he decided to make his way to Belgium.

"It took me one month to get to the Belgian border, where I was hidden in a police station by a friend who was an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The policeman drove me over the Belgian frontier, using his police papers. From there I

rang Belgium friends and spent four months in an isolated house in the middle of the Ardennes forest."

From Belgium, Le Ribault went secretly to England and from there to Jersey. He was now very aware of his position as a man without a home or a public identity. Although he does not mention it, he must frequently weigh up his situation in light of his early brilliant career.

"My friends have helped me because I have absolutely nothing. I have no money, no relatives. I am an illegal person, a stateless alien."

AN INCREASINGLY COMMON DRAMA

Dr Loïc Le Ribault's story reads in part like a Walt Disney film in which the boffin-like scientist, after some hocus-pocus in the laboratory, discovers a "cure-all elixir" and is then hounded, chemical flask in hand, by men in black hats.

From another perspective, however, his story reads in shades of the darkest *noir*, a synthesis of classic contemporary dramas in

Continued on page 74

The scientist, medical

scientist or doctor,

forced to work beyond

the orthodoxy and

subjected to powerful

manipulation, ridicule,

sabotage and/or

criminalisation,

is becoming an

increasingly common

figure in contemporary

drama as well as in

real life.

The Persecution and Resistance of Loïc Le Ribault

Continued from page 24

which the publicly concerned scientist finds himself, like Ibsen's character in *An Enemy of the People*, beyond the pale of the orthodox community, branded as a fraud and a charlatan and hounded by the furies of profit and power.

However we read the tale, we might recognise it as a once apocryphal story which is quickly becoming an everyday reality.

The scientist, medical scientist or doctor, forced to work beyond the orthodoxy and subjected to powerful manipulation, ridicule, sabotage and/or criminalisation, is becoming an increasingly common figure in contemporary drama as well as in real life.

Although the ethnic or national details of these histories of scientific dissent, whether their subject be BSE, vitamin B6, OS5 (the new name for G5), cold fusion, homoeopathy or everlasting light-bulbs, differ slightly, they are all stories of the post-modern era.

Le Ribault sees the patient's "right to choose" as being the salient right in the dispute between himself and the French State. "One point of great weight," he says, "seems to have been forgotten in this whole affair. It is not the medical authorities who should be deciding the fate of sick people. It is for the sick themselves and only the sick to make such decisions."

Le Ribault now feels he has done all he is personally able to do with OS5.

"I have agents in many countries and about 100 doctors and practitioners now using OS5. I receive calls from new doctors every day; there is a lot of interest in France, Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland and Portugal... I have the task of improving the molecule; it is doctors that should be treating people. The production of OS5 is in France, it is legal, it is non-toxic and it is to high standards."

Le Ribault is still angry and perturbed that the French government did not take the discovery from him and Norbert Duffaut, then take over its production and introduce it to the world as an accepted international medicine.

"It is not the government who are in control of the country," he says, "but the multinational corporations and the financial people; my struggle is evidence of that."

Continued next issue ...

Editor's Note:

OS5 can be ordered from the following address in Ireland, where Loïc Le Ribault has set up a laboratory to produce organic silica:

Loïc Le Ribault, c/- Ross Post Office, Castlebar, County Mayo, The Republic of Ireland.

About the Author:

Martin J. Walker is a researcher and writer as well as an activist. He has written a number of books about critical social issues including Dirty Medicine (1993; reviewed in NEXUS 2/10) and Skewed: Psychiatric Hegemony and the Manufacture of Mental Illness (2003; reviewed in 11/06). The full text of his article on Dr Loïc Le Ribault can be found at http://www.communicationagents.com/emma_holister/2004/11/24/ loic le ribaults resistance.htm. It was originally published as a booklet, "Loïc Le Ribault's Resistance: The creation of a treatment for arthritis and the persecution of its author, France's foremost scientist" forensic (Slingshot Publications, London, 1998, ISBN 0-9519646-1-5).

The Persecution and Resistance of Loïc Le Ribault

Continued from page 74

Endnotes

- 1. Loïc Le Ribault has a Bachelor's degree in Arts from the Sorbonne (1970), degrees in Oceanography, Ecology and Soil Science from Paris (1971), a Master's degree in Geomorphology from Paris (1971) and three doctorates, in Sedimentology, Science and Naturopathic Medicine. He has received many honours and awards and is the author of five books and over 100 published papers plus many articles. Between 1982 and 1991, Le Ribault gave evidence in over a thousand cases, helping to convict 800 defendants mainly of murder and other violent crimes. He introduced not only the electron scanning microscope to French criminal forensic work, but also the high technology mobile laboratory constructed in the back of a van.
- **2.** Le Ribault received his doctorate in geology and, as a result of his early work with electron microscopy, he got to know silica so well that he could determine the geological history of a grain of sand. In his first book, *The History of a Grain of Sand*, he told this very story. When he was first

- approached by the FBI to test three blinded sand samples, he was able to tell them the exact location in the world from which they had been collected, that one sample had been gathered from the bonnet of a car and that another had been in the vicinity of an explosion in Beirut.
- **3.** Carlisle, Edith M., "Silicon as an essential element", Environmental and Nutritional Science, School of Public Health, University of California, Los Angeles; "Newer Candidates for Essential Trace Elements", *Federation Proceedings* 1974 Jun; vol. 33, no. 6.
- **4.** Aubert, J.P., Magolon, G., "Silastic gel and elastomer in the cicatrisation of wounds in the rabbit", *J. Chir.* (Paris) 1993 Dec; 130(12):533-8.
- 5. Mishchuk, I.I., Nagaichuk, V.I., Gomon, N.L., Berezovskaia, Z.B., Ossovskaia, A.B., "Treatment of burn wounds and wounds healing with secondary tightening using dressings with Aerosil", *Klin. Khir.* 1994; (4):21-2.
- **6.** See, for example, the case of methyl sulphonyl methane (MSM), which has a remarkable similarity to the case of OS5. MSM is an organic sulphur found in meat, fish and fresh vegetables; it was was origi-

- nally used in synthetic form as a nutrient for stiff joints, but is now sold as the food supplement Supersulf. Dr Robert Hershier, who synthesised the compound, has always refused to deal with the pharmaceutical companies because he knows that the substance would be withdrawn and subjected to lengthy trials, which would in turn increase the price of MSM. However, Dr Hershier has managed to get his therapy passed by the US Food and Drug Administration as a food supplement.
- 7. Graille, Jean-Michel, Dossier Priore: une nouvelle affaire Pasteur?, Editions Denoel, Paris, 1984. During the Second World War, Antoine Priore, an officer in the Italian Navy, discovered by chance that certain forms of radiation were able to cure cancer. Following the war, Priore went to France and built a machine to generate radiation and with which he began to get good results on cancer patients. His work was watched, supported and verified with great interest and excitement by the French political establishment. But when an "independent" scientific report was made of his work by cancer specialists, its conclusions were falsified. Priore died in 1983.